



REDACTED VERSION

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION VI

**1201 ELM STREET
DALLAS, TEXAS 75270**

ARKWOOD INC.

OMAHA, ARKANSAS

COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN

FEBRUARY 1987

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Community Relations Plan
Arkwood, Inc.
Omaha, Arkansas

Introduction

This community relations plan outlines the anticipated community relations activities and program for the remedial investigation and feasibility study stages at the Arkwood, Inc. site near Omaha, Arkansas, in Boone County. The plan is based on a community assessment conducted by EPA in November 1986. Techniques used for the community assessment include: files review; interviews with elected officials, area property owners and residents, and other local officials; and drive throughout the area.

Site Background

The plant site was developed in the early 1900s when the railroad company excavated to a depth of 40-50 feet below natural grade to obtain fill dirt for the construction of the railroad embankment. The Arkwood plant was built and started operations at the site in the early 1960s. In 1973, the owner of Arkwood leased the treatment plant and the land to Mass Merchandisers, Inc. (MMI), of Harrison, Arkansas. The facility operated from 1973 until treatment operations ceased in June 1984, at which time MMI sold or removed the remaining inventory and process materials. In January 1985, the 12-year lease expired and was not renewed. The plant has not operated since that time.

According to MMI, wastes from the Arkwood treating operation were dumped into a sinkhole or cave at the treating plant from the beginning of the operations until 1970. The entrance to the cave, which is at ground level, was boarded and covered with a layer of dirt. Waste oils were also placed in a ditch adjacent to the railroad until approximately 1974, when the cost of the chemicals used in the treatment process forced the use of a recovery system and reduced the volume of wastes generated.

Other wastes consist, in part, of the liquid from washing of the treatment room floor and the equipment. These wastes accumulated in a tank and were then spread over the storage yard to control dust. Based on plant operations during 1970, it is estimated that a minimum of 6,000 to 7,000 pounds per year of waste were generated over the more than 20 years of operations.

Samples taken from the sawdust and wood chips pile indicated that a portion of this pile is contaminated with pentachlorophenol (PCP). The Arkansas Department of Pollution Control and Ecology detected PCP in samples taken from local water wells, natural springs in the area, and nearby Walnut Creek. In 1982, MMI drilled replacement wells for two nearby residents and retained a consulting firm to conduct a geohydrological study in the area.

There are approximately 174 residences within a 3-mile radius of the site who depend upon private wells for drinking water. Population of Omaha was listed at 191.

This site was nominated for the National Priorities List in September 1985 with a score of 34.21.

Site Description

The Arkwood site covers approximately 20 acres on the Missouri-Pacific's Cricket Railroad siding, one-half mile southwest of Omaha in Boone County, Arkansas. The site is located in an excavated area at the head of a valley approximately 1,000 feet west of U.S. Highway 65, north of Cricket Road.

The site consisted of a millwork shop, a wood treating plant which used PCP and creosote, and a storage yard for the treated wood products prior to sale. The majority of buildings and tanks at the site have recently been removed. There is also an area of sawdust and woodchips located in the southeast portion of the site.

History of Community Relations Activities

Little public attention was focused on the Arkwood site until 1981, when complaints were received from several residents that their private wells were contaminated. MMI tested the wells, replaced contaminated wells with new ones, and eventually purchased the property of one affected resident. Information provided during community interviews indicated that some residents living near the site were aware of potential problems from site contamination but were not concerned that there was an immediate threat to their health or welfare. Several individuals who were interviewed expressed the opinion that if the problem were serious, some action would already have been taken at the site.

While concerns of residents living near the site were focused on potential problems with site contamination, residents of nearby Omaha were more concerned about their inability to develop the site for some other industrial purpose. Developers of a large chicken feed operation--originally planned for the Arkwood site--decided to build their facility in another town when the site was placed on the National Priorities List. Several officials expressed concern that economic development in Omaha would be hindered by having Arkwood designated as a Superfund site.

A State-wide newspaper mentioned the Arkwood site in a September 6, 1985, article when the NPL proposal was released by EPA. The local newspaper ran an extensive article in August 1986 to report the lawsuit filed by the Arkansas Department of Pollution Control and Ecology against MMI and the owners of the property.

Community Issues and Concerns

Few of those interviewed knew much about the site, other than that it used to be a wood preserving operation. There has been little coverage in the local media, and no organized public information activities have been conducted. It was reported that there are no organized environmental or citizen groups concerned about the site. MMI has notified some local residents of test results of samples taken from their private wells. While the level of community concern about the site cannot be classified as high, most of those interviewed were interested in what the potential hazards may be and how the site's Superfund designation may affect the future of Omaha.

Several major issues and concerns regarding the site were expressed during community interviews.

Issue: Economic development is crucial for Omaha to survive. Will the Arkwood site stymie future development in the community?

Several interviewees stated that the failure to locate the feed plant in Omaha was a serious blow to the community. Arkwood's designation as a Superfund site appeared to be viewed by some as an added burden--one they'd rather not be saddled with. It was reported that some people thought the Superfund designation was a trick used to take Omaha out of contention for the feed facility. One local official stated that they had tried to get the Arkansas Department of Pollution Control and Ecology to keep the site under its control rather than have it declared a Superfund site. As one official stated, "If we can get it cleaned up, something's (industry) going to go in there." Some area residents reportedly blame EPA and MMI for the failure to locate the feed plant in Omaha.

Also with regard to economic development, Omaha has recently received a federal grant to expand its water system. Municipal water will soon be available to the vicinity of the Arkwood site. It is stated that this should further stimulate economic development.

The community of Omaha was reported to be an enterprise zone where businesses are encouraged to locate by receiving tax incentives.

Issue: There is open access to the site. Community events are held there.

Recently, three turkey shoots were held at the Arkwood site: Two by the senior class of the Omaha Public School and one by the Omaha Fire Department. It was also reported that citizens were hauling fill dirt from the site for personal use. The site is not totally fenced, and the gates were observed by community relations personnel to be open. No warning signs were posted at the site other than a sign at the entrance that stated "Not Responsible For Accidents". Nearby residents also reported that people use the site to "race" four-wheel-drive vehicles. One interviewee stated that a warning sign was needed to keep people out.

Issue: Remedial actions need to proceed quickly while money is available.

MMI reportedly has set aside stock in a trust fund to cover the cost of remedial actions at the site. It was reported that this trust fund will expire in 3 years. One interviewee asked why MMI wasn't just allowed to clean up the site since they had the money. Why EPA is spending money studying the site instead of cleaning it up is likely to emerge as an issue.

Issue: Could contamination from the site affect Table Rock Lake?

Table Rock Lake is a major recreational resource in the area of the Arkwood site. The lake is used for fishing, swimming, and boating. Cricket Creek drains from the site in the direction of Table Rock Lake. Several individuals interviewed expressed concern that Table Rock Lake could be affected by the site. "It's a wonder it doesn't kill the fish in the lake," expressed one citizen.

Issue: Water running in a stream adjacent to Cricket Road has a strong chemical smell. Does this pose any hazard to area residents?

A small stream, reported by MMI to be contaminated, runs from the site downhill adjacent to Cricket Road. One resident reported that her children liked to play in this stream and that it was difficult to keep them out of it.

Issue: Many residents living near the site depend on private water wells or springs for potable water. Is this water safe to drink? Some residents reported receiving information about sampling results; others reported they were not receiving information.

It appears that no organized system has been established to disseminate information to residents whose wells have been sampled. Some residents reported that they are receiving information. Residents who had not received information were concerned that contamination had been detected and they weren't being told.

Issue: Limestone formations underlying Boone County result in many caverns underground. Contamination could travel a long way in underground caverns.

A concern was expressed that if contamination were dumped into a sinkhole, it could travel a great distance from the site. County officials stated they recently performed a study with dye to track potential migration path of contamination from county landfills; dye was discovered 12 to 15-miles from where it was introduced into a cavern system.

Issue: What are the health effects of exposure to creosote and PCP?

Residents living near the site expressed a concern about the possible health effects of exposure to the creosote and PCP - either ingestion or inhalation. One citizen was very concerned because he had several maladies that could not be explained by his doctor in Little Rock.

Miscellaneous Comments:

The county recently did some sampling of surface waters in the Omaha area; Cricket Creek had unusually high levels of coliform and other bacteria.

Demolition and removal actions have been occurring at the site. Buildings have been dismantled and removed. Soils appear to have been covered with fill and grass seed.

Community Relations Objectives

- Establish and maintain open communication between the Arkansas Department of Pollution Control and Ecology (ADPC&E), cities of Omaha and Harrison, Boone County, residents living near the site, property owners, and EPA.
- Provide affected agencies, local officials, Congressional delegation, local residents, and news media with accurate and timely information regarding the objectives, progress, and findings of the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study.
- Provide central information locations for residents and local officials to receive information on site activities, project status, and study results.
- Provide all interested parties an opportunity to review the Feasibility Study and comment on the remedial action alternatives.
- Monitor changes in community concerns as the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study progresses. Evaluate the community relations plan to determine whether adjustments are necessary.

Community Relations Techniques

● EPA Presence and Contacts

EPA staff visited the site and surrounding communities to conduct interviews for this community relations plan. Discussions were held with the Mayor of Omaha, County Judge, County Extension Agent for Boone County, other local officials, and area residents. The overall RI/FS process was explained and Ellen Greeney (EPA Region 6) was identified as the contact for all information requests. The County Sanitarian receives most of the calls from local residents who are concerned about the site and should be kept apprised of activities at the Arkwood site.

● Briefing of Local Officials

A brief presentation of the Superfund process and the workplan for the Remedial Investigation was presented to the Mayor, School Board of Omaha and other interested citizens on February 2, 1987. Seventy two persons including 3 media attended the meeting. Another briefing will be planned to describe various alternatives for clean up and the results of the remedial investigation. Other presentations will be scheduled, as needed.

- Local Information Repositories

Local information repositories were established at the Omaha School Library, Boone County Courthouse, Harrison Library, and ADPC&E in Little Rock.

Generic brochures regarding EPA and the Superfund program were placed in the repositories during the on-site interviews. An informational map and narrative specific for the Arkwood site were also included in the repository packages. As other technical documents are approved by EPA, they will be added to the repository file.

- Press Releases

Press releases will be issued as appropriate throughout the remedial activities. At a minimum, a press release will be issued at the completion of the Feasibility Study to identify alternative remedial actions and to announce the public comment period and public meeting.

Springfield, Missouri television stations and print media provide more coverage in the Boone County area than Little Rock media. Most area residents watch transmissions out of Springfield instead of Little Rock.

- Well Water Results

A letter explaining the results of the latest well sampling will be sent to the well owners and users. These letters will be mailed as soon after the sampling as possible.

- Fact Sheet

A brief (4 page) summary of the Feasibility Study will be prepared for the elected officials, groups, and interested citizens. This fact sheet will provide a clear, accurate description of the site background, remedial investigation, site hazards, and feasible alternatives for clean-up.

The Omaha Public School publishes a parents' bulletin that could be used to announce upcoming events and provide information to the community.

- Public Comment Period

A three-week public comment period will be provided after EPA's approval of the Feasibility Study. Notice of the comment period and the availability of the Feasibility Study will be issued two weeks before the comment period begins. A public meeting will be scheduled in Omaha during the public comment period and announced at the same time.

The Omaha Public School is a focal point for the community and is a good location for public meetings and for an information repository. Donna Dees is the contact person at the school.

- Monitor Community Concerns

Contact has been established and will be maintained with elected officials, community leaders, and area residents. Also the local semi-weekly newspaper will be scanned to determine changes in the community concerns about the site.

- Project Mailing List

A mailing or contacts list has been developed that identifies elected officials, interested groups, adjacent property owners, and area residents. This list will be updated as appropriate and will be used to provide status reports, fact sheets or public notices directly to all those listed.

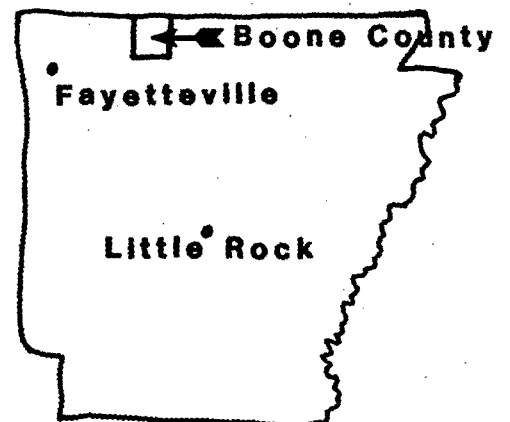
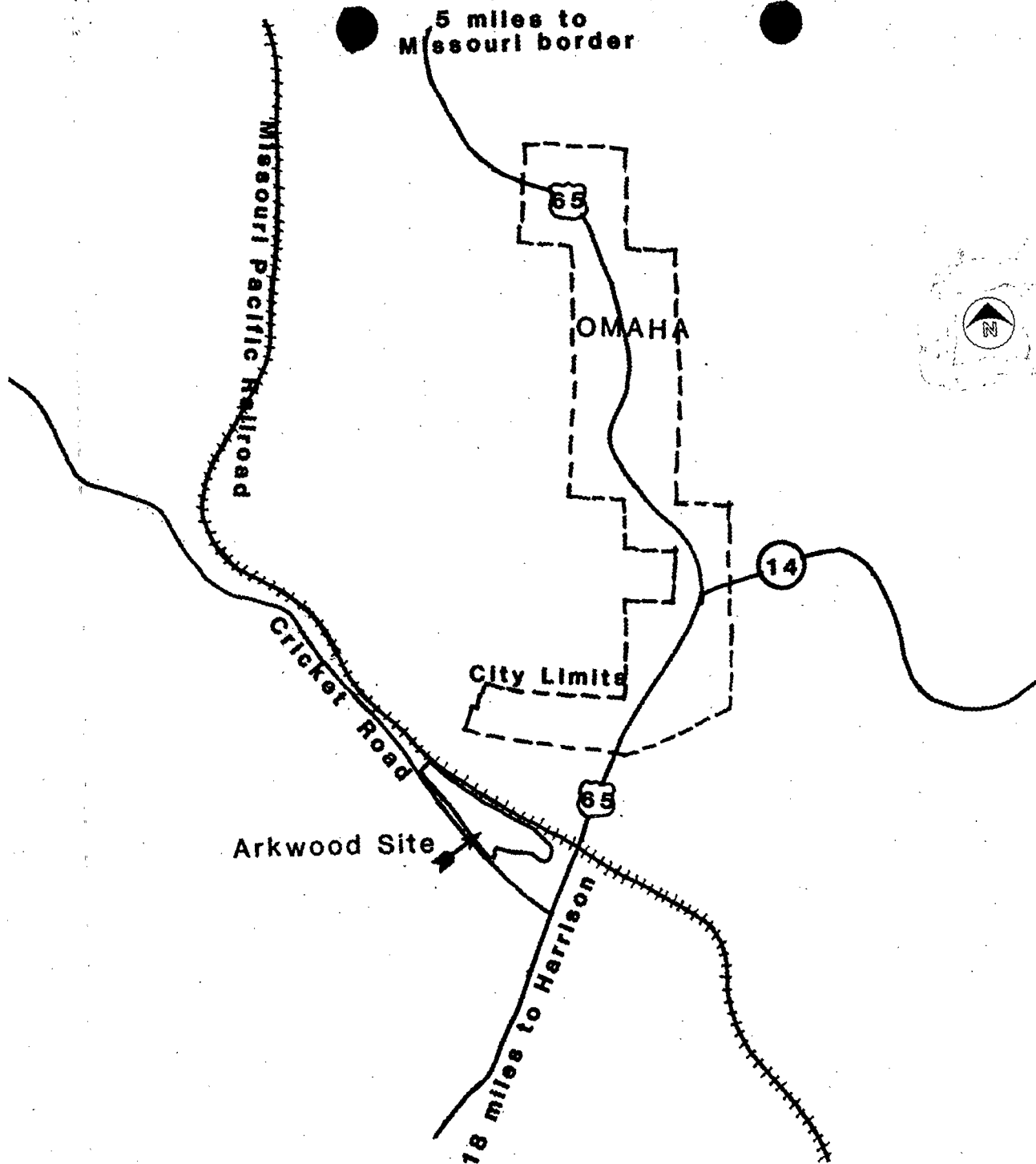
- Responsiveness Summary

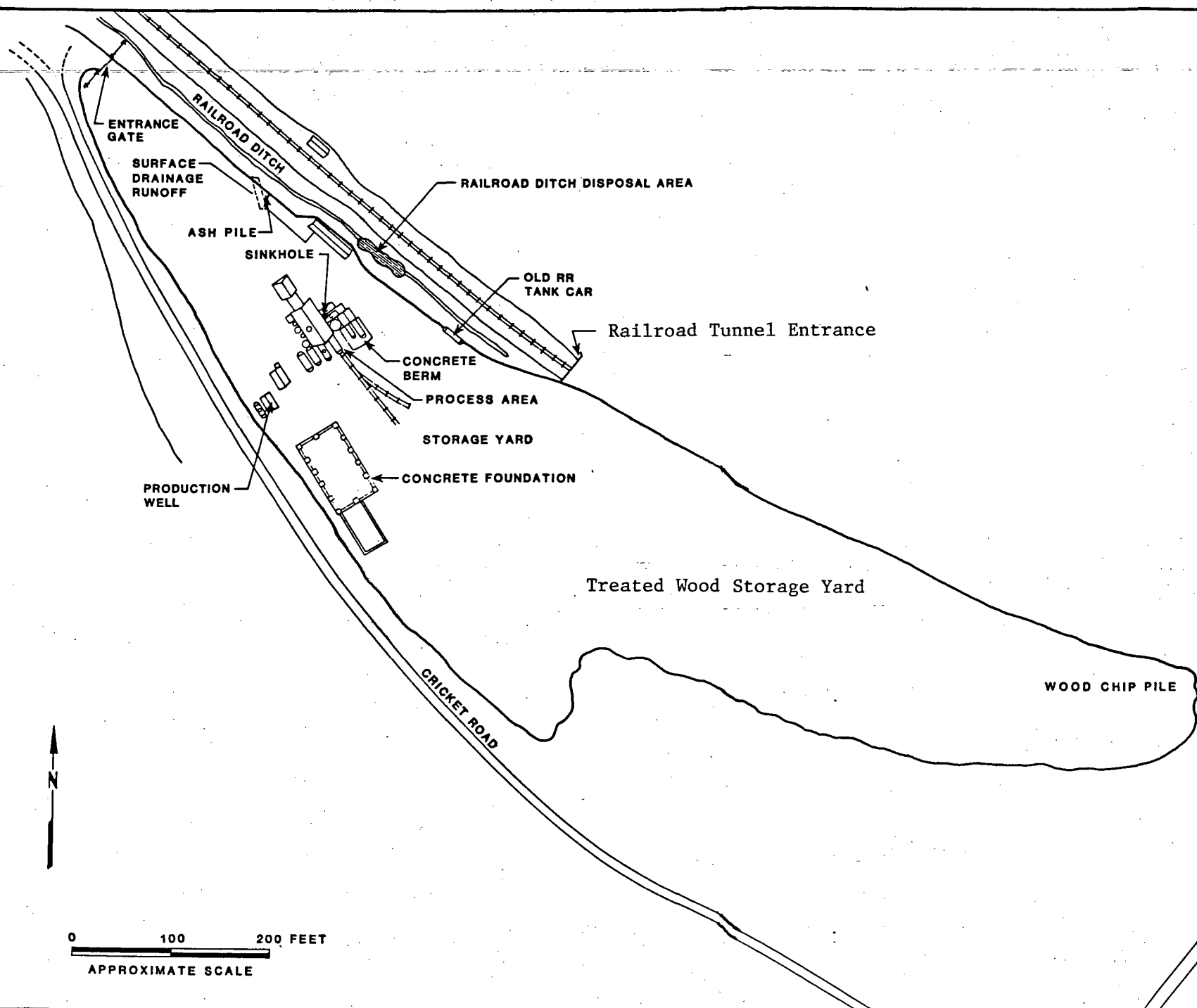
A Responsiveness Summary, which summarizes all the public comments (oral and written) received during the public comment period and EPA's responses, will be prepared. This document will be furnished to all commenters and the repositories.

- Revise Community Relations Plan

This community relations plan will be revised if significant changes occur during the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study. As a minimum, the plan will be revised after the decision has been made regarding cleanup. Local concerns and necessary changes will be reflected in the revised plan.

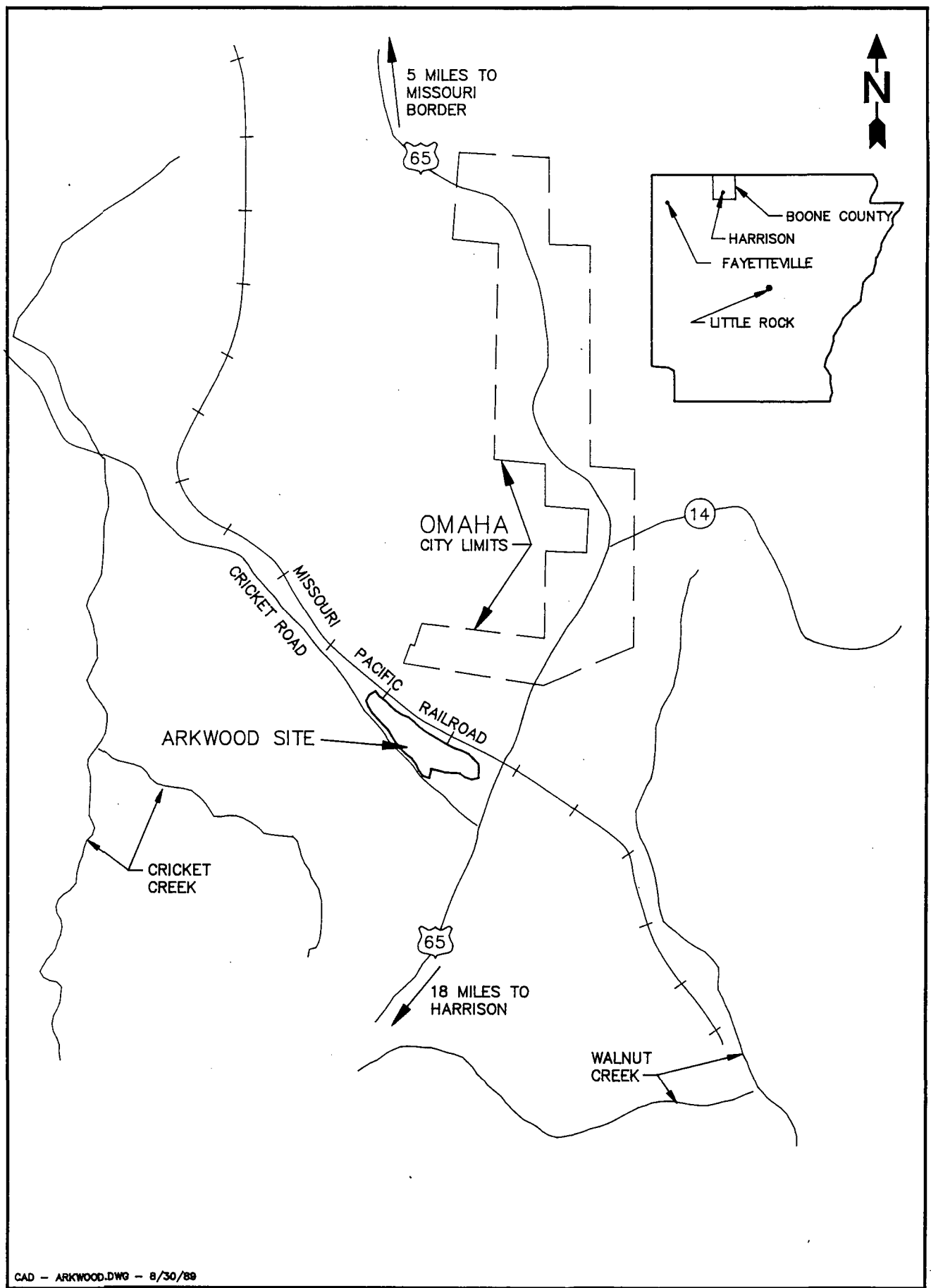
Appendix A
Site Location Maps
and
Photographs

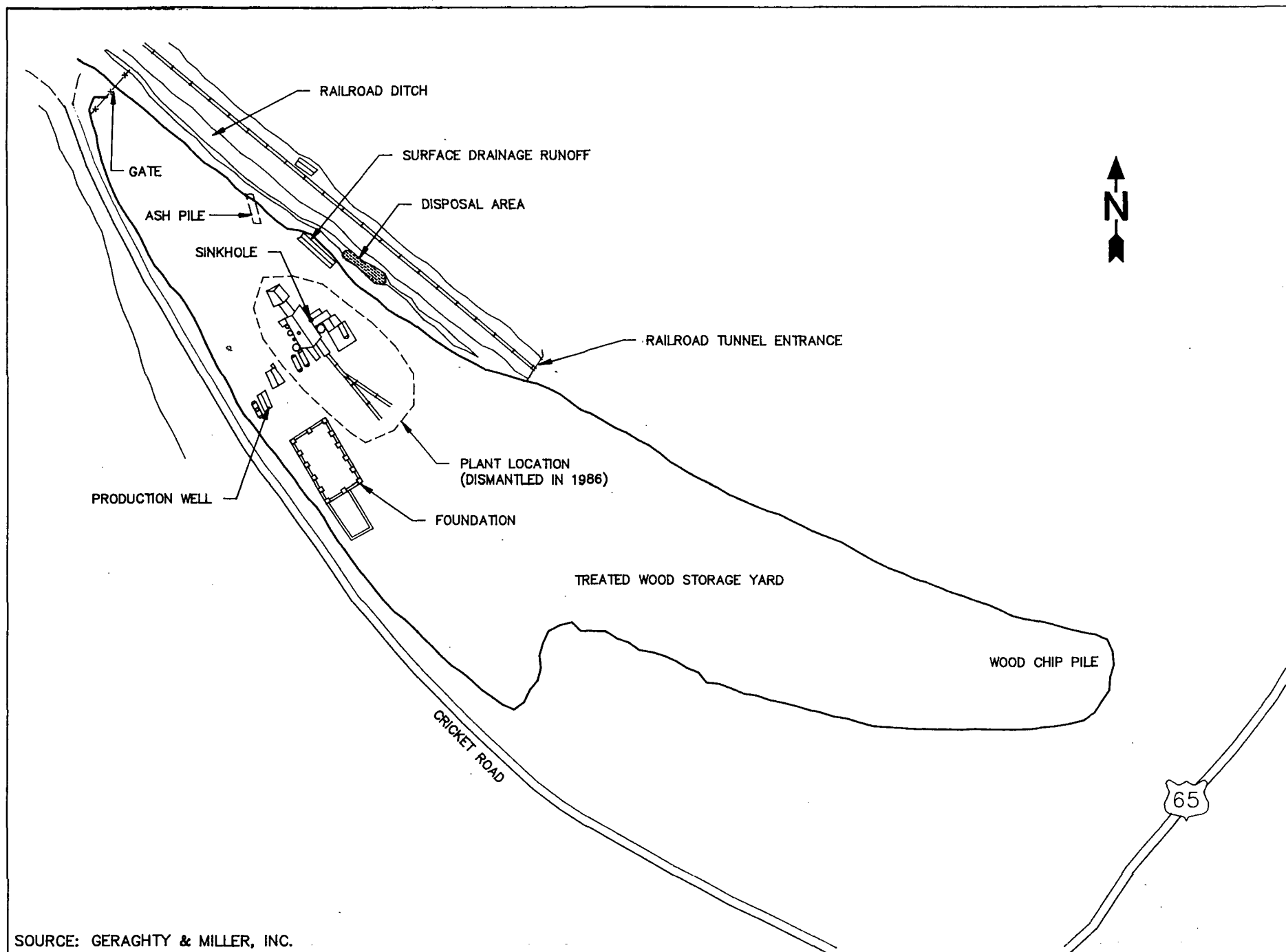




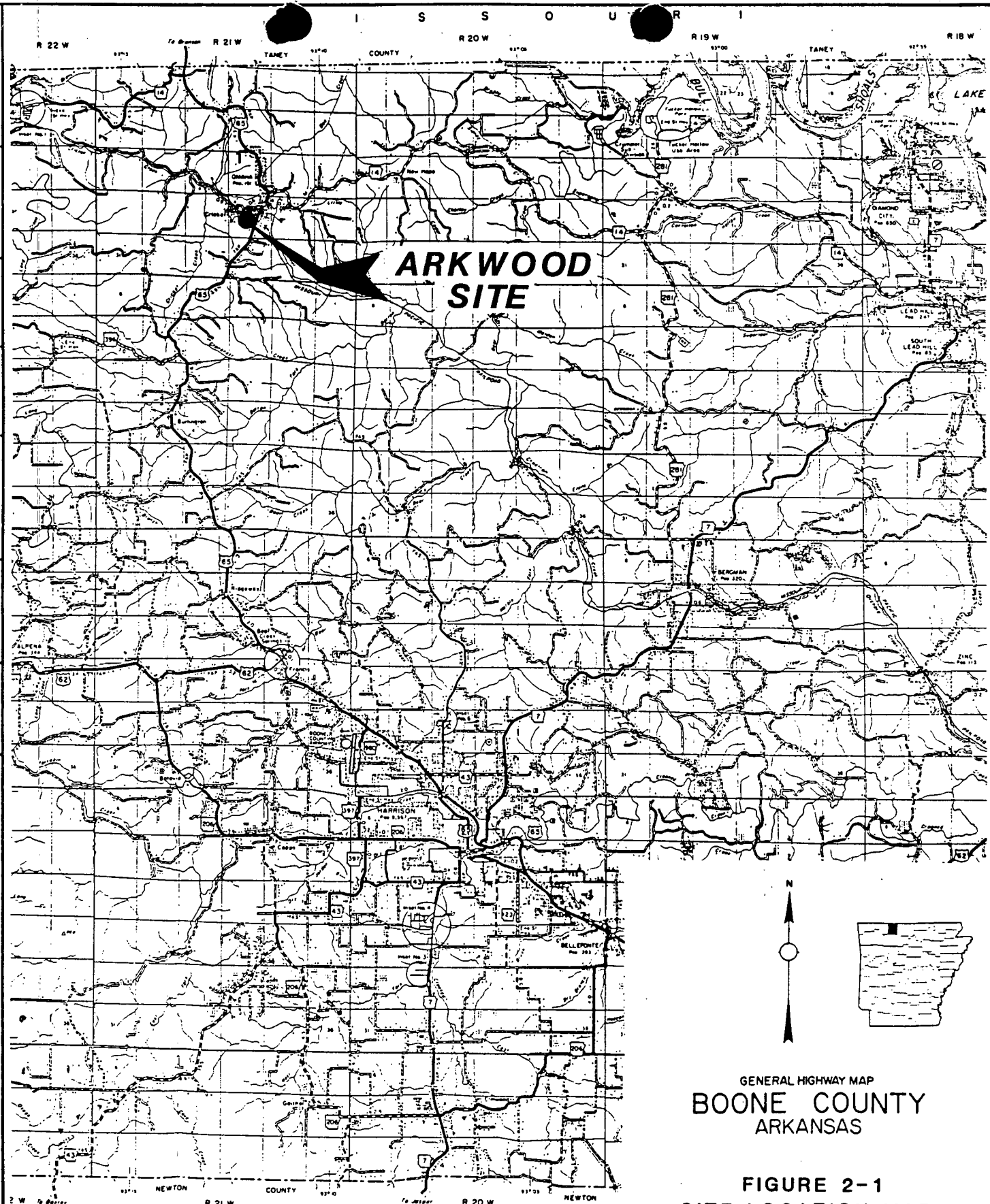
0 100 200 FEET
APPROXIMATE SCALE

SITE MAP
RI/FS WORK PLAN
ARKWOOD, INC.
OMAHA, ARKANSAS
 GERAGHTY
& MILLER, INC.
Ground-Water Consultants





SOURCE: GERAGHTY & MILLER, INC.



GENERAL HIGHWAY MAP
BOONE COUNTY
 ARKANSAS

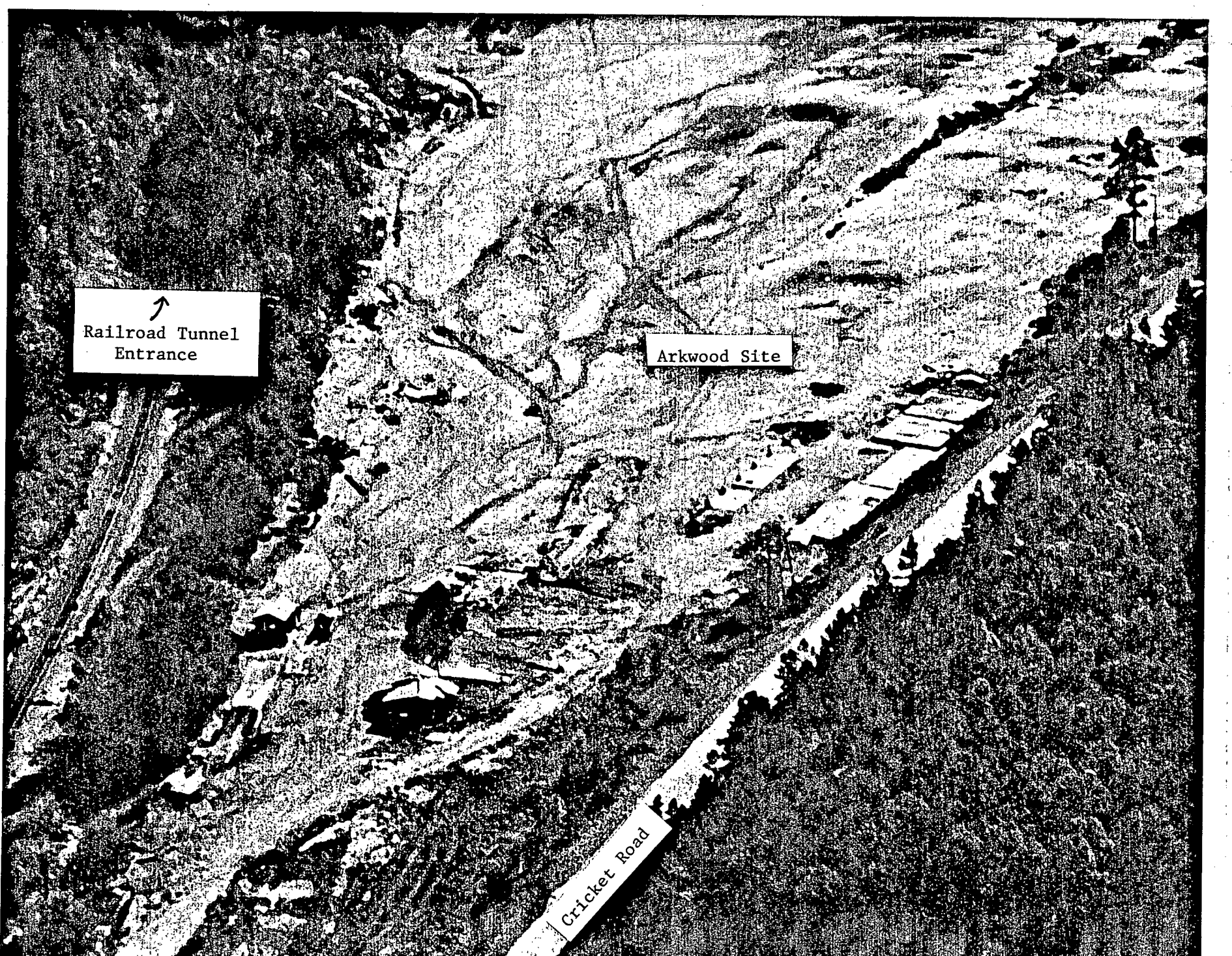
FIGURE 2-1
SITE LOCATION MAP

RI/FS WORK PLAN
ARKWOOD, INC.
OMAHA, ARKANSAS

GERAGHTY & MILLER, INC.
Ground-Water Consultants

PREPARED BY:
 ARKANSAS STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
 PLANNING DIVISION
 IN COOPERATION WITH
 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

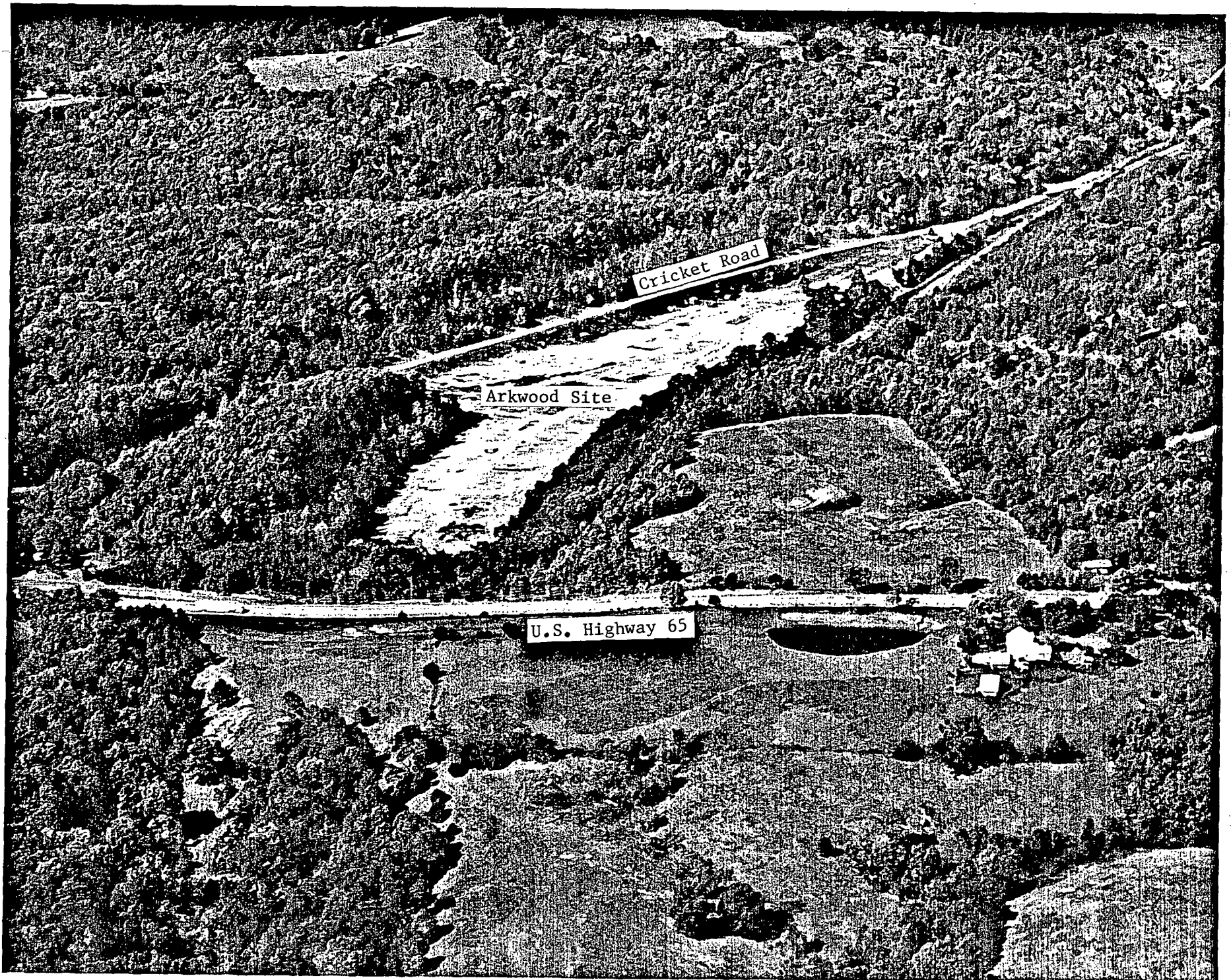
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↑
Railroad Tunnel
Entrance

Arkwood Site

Cricket Road

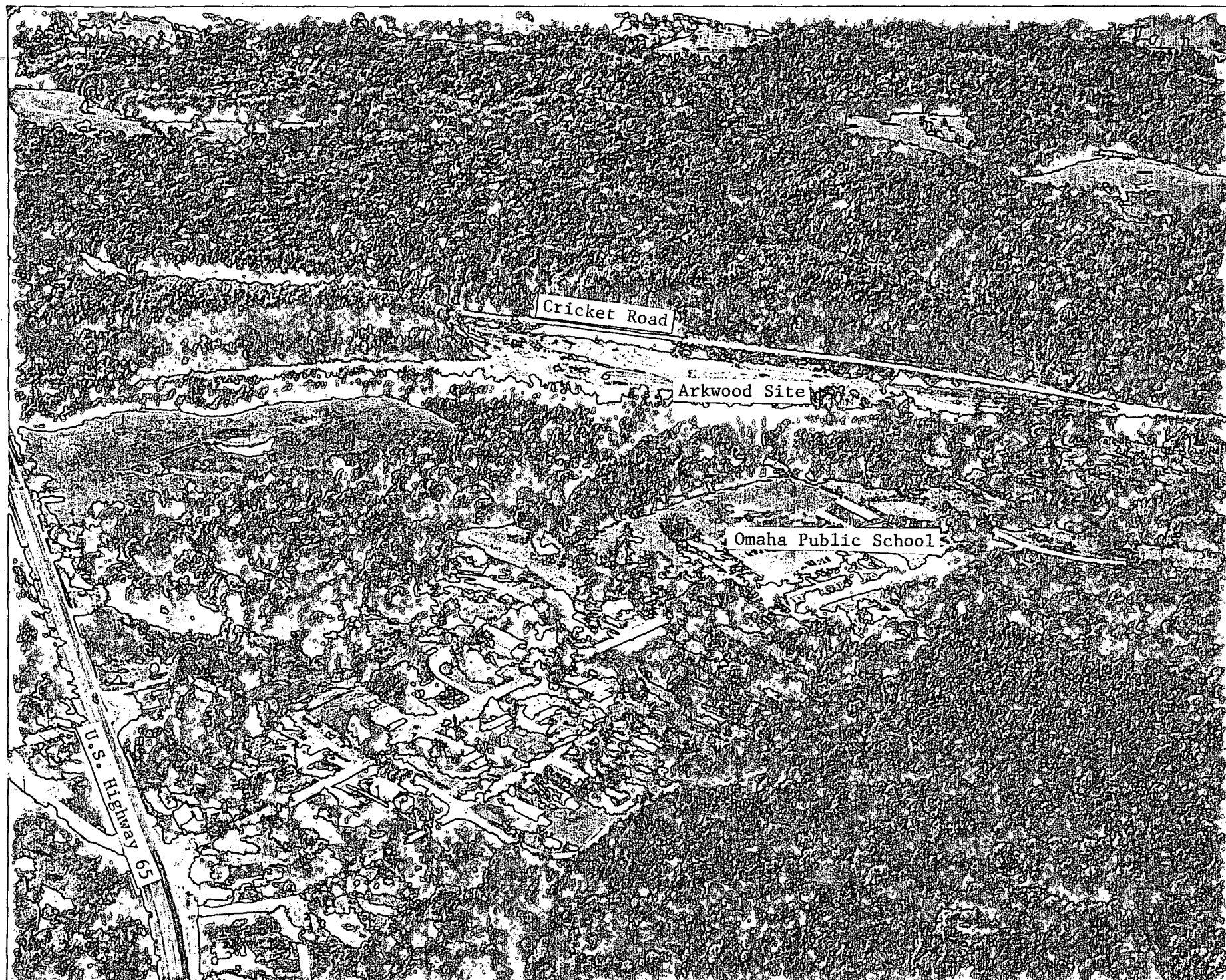


Cricket Road

Arkwood Site

U.S. Highway 65







Appendix B
Contacts List

Federal Officials (elected)

2
Dale Bumpers
United States Senate

4
John Paul Hammerschmidt
House of Representatives

3
David Pryor
United State Senate

State Officials (elected)

1
Bill Clinton
Governor of Arkansas
Little Rock, AR

7
Stephen W. Luelf
State Senator
P. O. Drawer 447
Mt Home, AR 72653
501-425-7777

5
Billy Joe Purdon
State Representative
Route A, Box 9
Yellville, AR 72687
504-449-6466

6
Bob Watts
State Representative
South Cherry Street
Harrison, AR 72601
501-741-3496

Local Officials

8
Jake Arnold
Mayor of Omaha
City Offices
Omaha, AR 72662
501-426-3388

10
Cliff Gale
Boone County Judge
P. O. Box 96
Harrison, AR 72601
501-741-5760

9
Danny Harness
Mayor of Harrison
P. O. Box 1715
Harrison, AR 72601
501-741-6666

18
Debbie Johnson
County Health Unit
201 North Vine
Harrison, AR 72061
501-741-3796

12
Bobby J. Malone
County Extension Agent
P. O. Box 848
Harrison, AR 72601
501-741-6168

86
Postmaster
U. S. Post Office
Omaha, AR 72662
501-426-3443

71
John Roberts
Omaha Water Department
P. O. Box 55
Omaha, AR 72662
501-426-5395

38
Paul E. Roten
Boone County Sanitarian
201 North Vine Street
Harrison, AR 72602
501-741-3505

11
Merle Villines
Justice of the Peace
Route 1, Box 103A
Omaha, AR 72662
501-426-3416

90
Mike Youngblood
Boone County Sanitarian
201 North Vine Street
Harrison, AR 72602
501-741-3505

Groups/Organizations

21

N Ark Community College
Pioneer Ridge
Harrison, AR 72601
501-743-3000

19

Mrs. Kenneth Bailey
League of Women Voters
1209 Eugene
Harrison, AR 72601
501-741-8553

20

Kandy Gregg-Webb
League of Women Voters
224 West Stephenson
Harrison, AR 72601
501-741-2711

17

Jim Milum, President
Chamber of Commerce
P. O. Box 939
Harrison, AR 72602
501-741-2659

Local Media

15

Harrison Daily Times
P. O. Box 40
Harrison, AR 72602
501-741-2325

16

Boone County Headlight
P. O. Box 40
Harrison, AR 72602
501-741-2325

88

Newsroom
KOLR-10 TV
P. O. Box 1716
Springfield, MO 65805
417-862-1010

87

Newsroom
KY-3 TV
P. O. Box 3500
Springfield, MO 65806
417-866-2766

95

Mike Penprase
Springfield Daily News
P. O. Box 716
Holister, MO 67672
417-334-1799

Adjacent Property Owners

37
J. A. Anthony
Union Pacific Railway Co
6400 Martin
Kansas City, MO 64120

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

36
E. C. May, Gen. Mgr.
Union Pacific Railway Co
6400 Martin
Kansas City, MO 64120

(b) (6)

35
A. L. Shoener
Union Pacific Railway Co
6400 Martin
Kansas City, MO 64120

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

Other Interested Citizens

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

30

Bob Barker
Project Coordinator, MMI
Box 790
Harrison, AR 72601
501-741-3425

(b) (6)

29

Bill Doshier
Doshier & Bowers
P. O. Box 1797
Harrison, AR 72601
501-741-6166

31

Patrick L. Francks
Geraghty & Miller
11816 Sunray Drive, #A
Baton Rouge, LA 70816
504-252-1004

(b) (6)

62

Husky Industries, Inc
Highway 65 South
Omaha, AR 72662
501-426-3338

(b) (6)

27

Dr. Bill Ray Lewis
Superintendent of Schools
Box 249
Omaha, AR 72662
501-426-3366

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

(b) (6)

94
Lisa Simkins
McKesson Environmental Sv
P. O. Box 9019
Pleasantown, CA 94566

(b) (6)

42
Pee Wee Widener
Kerr-McGee Gas Station
Highway 65
Omaha, AR 72662
501-no phone

11
Scott Berdine
Shiroo, Inc.
1195 Empire Central
Dallas, TX 75247
214-

4
D. E. Cutteli
OSCA
P. O. Box 53095
Lafayette, LA 70505
316-837-6085

5
Thomas A. Dardas
Detox Industries
12919 Dairy Ashford
Sugar Land, TX 77478
713-240-0892

6
Nancy Funderburk
Hazcom, Inc.
32522 McAllister
Brookshire, TX 77430
713-391-1085

9
Daphne Gemmill
US EPA, 401 M Street, SW
Washington, DC 20460
202-

7
Rock Grundman
Dresser Industries
P. O. Box 718
Dallas, TX 75221
214-740-6898

14
Paul Hemphill
Radian Corp
10675 Richmond Ave, #170
Houston, TX 77042
713-

1
Art Leuterma
Dresser Industries
601 Jefferson
Houston, TX 77002
713-750-2335

13
Beth Marshall
Chemfix Tech, Inc
2424 Edenborn Ave #620
Metairie, LA 70001
504-831-3600

10
Dennis Metz
Environment Mgt Tech
P. O. Box 190622
Dallas, TX 75219
214-

2
Mr. Richard M. Miller
Am Ecology Services
127 East 59 Street
New York, NY 10022

8
John H. Murph
President, JMI
1100 Milan, Suite 3477
Houston, TX 77002
713-65A-09A7

(b) (6)



State-Wide Interest

7

Jane Rice, Ark Game &
Fish Commission
2 Natural Resources Drive
Little Rock, AR 72205
501-223-6413

2

Dr. Phyllis Garnett
ADPC&E, P. O. Box 9583
Little Rock, AR 72209
501-562-7444

8

(b) (6)

4

Ed Morris
ADPC&E, P.O. Box 9583
Little Rock, AR 72209
501-562-7444

5

J. Randy Young, Soil &
Water Conservation
One Capitol Mall, #2D
Little Rock, AR 72201
501-371-1611

3

John Ward
ADPC&E, P. O. Box 9583
Little Rock, AR 72209
501-562-7444

6

Don Wise
ARK Dept of Health
4815 West Markham
Little Rock, AR 72201
501-661-2301

Appendix C
Repositories

89

Donna Dees
Omaha Public School
&
Box 249
Omaha, AR 72662
501-426-3366

13

Marilyn Smith
Boone County Library
221 West Stephenson Ave
Harrison, AR 72601
501-741-3665

96

John Ward
Dept of Pollution Control
8001 National Drive
Little Rock, AR 72209
501-562-7444

14

David Witty
Boone County Clerk
P. O. Box 846
Harrison, AR 72604
501-741-8428

Materials at repositories 11/5/86

- o Arkwood fact sheet and map
- o Generic Superfund, NPL sites, Remedial, Public Involvement brochures
- o Groundwater brochure
- o EPA brochure
- o Workplan, QA plan, Health & Safety Plan, 2/2/87